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FM AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7374
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 1583
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1593
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 1565
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 1562
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 1516
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1520
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1507
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1392
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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1122
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 1553
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 1590
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS 0909
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 8591

UNCLAS DUSHANBE 000799

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SUBJECT: TAJIKISTAN'S SEQUOIAS, FROM CALIFORNIA TO DUSHANBE

¶1. A recent letter from a 75-year-old amateur historian William Allen in California shows Tajikistan is not totally unknown. Allen wanted to know if sequoia trees, native to California's Sierra Nevada, were thriving in Tajikistan and attached a copy of a 1964 news article that reported Dushanbe imported 5,000 trees from California in 1934, including giant sequoias. The article quoting ITAR-TASS says, "It was formerly believed that sea mists were required for the normal growth of this tree, which is dying out in natural conditions," adding that Soviet scientists, "by successfully planting them in Tadzhikistan (sic), have proved otherwise."

¶2. Despite initial doubt by EmbOffs and the fact that Tajikistan is far, far away from any sea mists, a few sequoias from California are indeed scattered throughout Dushanbe. Post's New Embassy Compound landscaper, a former director of the Dushanbe Botanical Gardens, gave PolOff a detailed horticultural history of sequoias in Dushanbe and showed EmbOffs where the sequoias are located. "Are these really sequoia trees?" EmbOffs questioned repeatedly. "Yes, 100% sure!" proclaimed the landscaper. Post responded to Allen and the Department of Interior to whom Allen had initially written, with photos attached. Allen, was tremendously happy with the response and offered via e-mail a "big kiss and hug" to EmbOffs. (COMMENT: A thank you will do fine. END COMMENT.)

¶3. The following is the text of the Ambassador's response to Allen and the Department of the Interior official.

Dear Mr. Allen:

Thank you for your keen interest in the botanical history of Dushanbe and for sharing the interesting article from your local paper. As an avid gardener myself, I wanted to make sure we found accurate information for you.

A number of trees imported from the United States to Tajikistan

are from California, although exactly how many is no longer known. According to a local expert botanist, the Dushanbe Botanical Gardens display about 450 types of trees from the United States. Planted throughout the city of Dushanbe are 130 tree varieties from all over the world, including 30 from the United States.

Sequoia trees can be seen along Rudaki Avenue, the main street in the capital, and a total of 130 sequoias grow in Dushanbe, some reaching up to 40 meters. Many more sequoias were planted in 1935, but unfortunately, some have been damaged and did not survive through the years. I cannot confirm that 5,000 trees were brought from California in 1934. However, the Botanical Gardens reported that 5,000 trees were brought from Russia at that time.

I hope you will enjoy the accompanying photo of a sequoia tree in Dushanbe. I look forwarding to reading any relevant articles you may write for the Tulare County Historical Society Quarterly.

Sincerely,

Richard Hoagland

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